



# FACT SHEET

## SHAKEN BABY SYNDROME – SBS (Also called Shaken Baby Impact Syndrome)

Bureau of Health  
Division of Community Health  
Maine Injury Prevention Program  
(MIPP)

1-800-698-3624  
or  
(207) 287-9968  
Fax: (207) 287-3993

### What Does the MIPP Offer?

- Education, information, and resource materials on a variety of youth injury prevention topics.
- Technical assistance to local programs and communities to address prevention to Maine's children and family injuries.
- Grants to community agencies to prevent injuries, suicide and violence.
- Training and education to increase the knowledge and skills of individuals and agencies working with children, families and caregivers to prevent injuries.
- Surveillance of injury morbidity and mortality to monitor the incidence of injuries among Maine's children and families.

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### What is Shaken Baby Syndrome?

Shaken Baby Syndrome is the medical term that describes injuries suffered by an infant or small child when shaken. Every year, thousands of babies in the U.S. suffer injuries or die from being shaken. **If the child survives**, lifelong specialized and medical care bills for brain injuries can be as high as 300 thousand dollars (\$300,000) within the first five years of life.

### Why is SBS so Dangerous?

A child's brain is soft and small and its neck is weak. When shaken, a child's head flops back and forth as if on a hinge. The brain hits the front and back of the inside of the skull. This can cause the brain to bleed, bruise and swell. 50% of shaken infants or young children will have permanent disabling injuries. Brain injury may cause:

Death	Mental Retardation	Paralysis	Blindness
Seizures	Cerebral Palsy	Epilepsy	Deafness

### Is Shaken Baby Syndrome a Problem in Maine?

Each year about 30 Maine children suffer injuries associated with Shaken Baby Syndrome.

### Why Does SBS Happen?

SBS often happens because a parent or caregiver is frustrated or angry with a crying baby. Rough play with infants, such as tossing them into the air needs to be avoided. Gentle bouncing or rocking does not cause harm.

### What are the Signs or Symptoms of SBS?

A baby that is shaken may have a concussion, vomit, be very irritable, have a hard time feeding, seem sleepy and/or go into a coma. The baby's brain may be badly damaged with few, if any, visible physical signs. A child that has been shaken **must be taken to the hospital immediately** to receive medical care.

### If SBS is Suspected.

To report specific instances of suspected child abuse, such as Shaken Baby Syndrome, contact the Maine Department of Human Services Regional Office or Emergency Services at **1-800-452-1999**.

This information is not intended to make adults and caregivers afraid to handle or play with children. It is meant to remind everyone that special care must be taken when handling children and that a child must **never** be shaken for any reason.

**NEVER, NEVER SHAKE A BABY**